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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The tenth annual meeting on cooperation between the United Nations system and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was held at the Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa from 6 to 10 November 1995. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Lansana Kouyaté, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and Mr. Vijay Makhan, OAU Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Cooperation.

2. In his opening statement, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of OAU, noted the deep-rooted and special relations between OAU and the United Nations system and stressed that the meeting should indicate ways of revitalizing such cooperation and avoiding duplication of efforts. He said that the new realities and challenges that have emerged in Africa should enhance the cooperation between the two organizations and make it more action-oriented.

3. For his part, the Executive Secretary of ECA noted the initiatives taken by the United Nations system to reinforce its commitment to Africa's development, notably the special initiative on Africa. He underlined the usefulness of renewal and reform to improve Africa's socio-economic development and stressed that the meeting should help build an effective partnership to serve Africa.

4. The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs said that the link between peace, democracy and development, as demonstrated in the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace", showed that peace was a prerequisite for development. Internal conflicts and civil strife in Africa continued to pose serious problems to regional peace and security and to undermine development efforts. Since OAU had established a mechanism for conflict prevention and management, the two organizations had cooperated to promote preventive diplomacy as an instrument for peace. The meeting would provide a good opportunity for defining the modalities of cooperation between the United Nations and OAU in peace-building and conflict prevention, management and resolution.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Participation

5. The meeting was attended by the following organizations and bodies:

Organization of African Unity (OAU)

United Nations Secretariat

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP)

World Food Programme (WFP)

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Bank/International Finance Corporation

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

B. Agenda

6. The agenda of the meeting was as follows:

A. Review of the cooperation between the United Nations and OAU.

B. Peace, security and democracy:

1. Prevention and management of conflicts;

2. Democratic transition in Africa.

C. Economic and social questions:

1. Report on the implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community;

2. Report on the extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers of OAU held at Cairo on 27 and 28 March 1995;

3. United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa;

4. Report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s;

5. Implementation of Agenda 21;

6. Human resources;

7. Refugees, returnees and displaced persons;

8. Situation of the African child;

9. Population and development;

10. Women and development;

11. Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa;

12. Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. The meeting adopted the following conclusions and recommendations:

A. Peace, security and democracy

8. The Organization of African Unity and the United Nations recognize the importance of developing and maintaining a culture of peace, tolerance and harmonious relationships so as to contribute to the prevention of conflicts and wars in Africa. To this end, they will strengthen and broaden their cooperation in measures to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa.

1. Prevention and management of conflicts

9. The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution has recently upgraded its automated information capability and is currently developing a database to assist with early warning. With this capacity in place, the United Nations was requested to assist OAU in the establishment of an early-warning or alert system as well as a "situation centre" similar to that of the United Nations. The support to OAU could be in the form of technical assistance and training of personnel, including staff exchange programmes, designed to enhance its capability to collect, analyse and disseminate information, as well as to monitor and keep abreast with political developments and potential conflict situations in Africa. OAU and the United Nations should also cooperate in the exchange and coordination of information between their respective early-warning systems, with a view to preventing or minimizing duplication. It was proposed that a coordinating mechanism should be established between OAU and the United Nations system to follow up on this initiative.

10. When the need arises, joint OAU-United Nations fact-finding missions should be mounted and their tasks should include assessment of existing and potential conflicts as well as mediation. For this purpose, it would be necessary to identify and establish a common list of eminent persons who could be fielded for such assignments.

11. While acknowledging the primary responsibility of the United Nations for peace-keeping, it was recommended that the two organizations should establish common guidelines and rules of engagement for joint operations in Africa where necessary, with a view to facilitating and strengthening the participation of OAU in such matters. In this regard, OAU has envisaged the establishment of peacemaking contingents and the limited deployment of observers which would require logistical support from the United Nations.

12. The United Nations was requested to collaborate more closely with OAU in the latter's peacemaking initiatives in Africa and to assist in the mobilization of financial and logistical support for specific OAU peacemaking activities. The United Nations was also requested to assist OAU in strengthening the institutional and operational capacity of its Conflict Management Division through human resources development, research activities, public awareness and sensitization campaigns.

13. In the context of post-conflict peace-building, the United Nations and OAU should collaborate in identifying, designing and implementing programmes of rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as programmes to address the needs of refugees, returnees, displaced persons, demobilized combatants and others affected by conflict.

2. Democratic transition in Africa

14. The Organization of African Unity and the United Nations should cooperate in promoting education for democracy, human rights and freedom by jointly organizing seminars, workshops and symposia, with a view to sensitizing policy makers, the general public and national democratic institutions to the values, principles and practices of democracy. In order to consolidate the culture of democracy, freedom and human rights, the United Nations and OAU should jointly mobilize resources to support democratization.

15. The United Nations was requested to support the OAU electoral unit in enhancing its institutional capacity for assisting countries, upon request, in their electoral processes. In this context, both organizations should cooperate in such areas as the provision of logistics, exchange of information, joint assessment of the election exercise and other related activities. The two organizations should also develop common criteria for the verification of electoral processes and for debriefing and issuance of statements relating to electoral processes.

B. Economic and social questions

1. Implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community

16. The United Nations organizations and bodies should cooperate with OAU in preparing papers on key policy and sectoral issues for consideration by the first session of the Economic and Social Commission of the African Economic Community. They were also requested to cooperate with OAU in strengthening the

institutional, analytical and operational capacity of the regional economic communities and in formulating specific programmes to that end. Furthermore, they were requested to cooperate with OAU in the preparation of protocols on various aspects of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community and in the review of existing protocols (including those on the regional economic communities) and in the drafting of new protocols.

17. The meeting stressed the need to mount an effective and sustained publicity campaign for the Treaty throughout Africa and called on all United Nations organizations and bodies to cooperate with OAU in drawing up strategies and plans to that end. The strategies and plans should have in focus the different target groups in African societies, including policy makers, professional associations, the private sector, workers, universities, youth, the media, etc., that should be fully involved as champions and promoters. The United Nations organizations and bodies were requested to include in their programmes for African countries those aspects of the Treaty that would generate interest and sensitize people.

18. The urgent need to strengthen the institutional, analytical and operational capacity of the OAU secretariat to enable it to cope with its additional responsibilities was stressed. Work on the structural reorganization of OAU must be accelerated and completed early, in keeping with the requirements of the implementation process of the African Economic Community. The United Nations organizations and bodies should support and assist OAU so as to facilitate an expeditious and successful completion of the task.

2. Extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers of OAU (Cairo, 27 and 28 March 1995)

19. It was noted that the implementation of the Cairo Agenda for Action for relaunching Africa's economic and social development, adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at its extraordinary session of March 1995 and by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its thirty-first session (AHG/Res.236 (XXXI)), was largely the responsibility of States at the national level. However, OAU was asked to encourage its members to ensure consistency between the Cairo Agenda and national policies and to make the Agenda the basis for negotiations with multilateral financial institutions, United Nations organizations and other development partners for economic reform and development programmes. The specialized agencies were requested to provide support for the implementation of the Cairo Agenda in their areas of competence.

20. In order to maximize the potential of the joint ECA/OAU/African Development Bank (ADB) secretariat in support of the Cairo Agenda, the meeting stressed the need to put in place clear systems and procedures that would facilitate the task of the joint secretariat, including delineation of functions and responsibilities, adoption of a work plan, joint programming and coordination of activities, etc.

21. United Nations system-wide support was requested to assist OAU in the preparation of the African common position on food security and agricultural

development for the World Food Summit to be convened by FAO from 13 to 17 November 1996.

3. United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa

22. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Initiative for Africa was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in October 1995, and it was decided that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa would be launched in early 1996. The Initiative will also contain a programme on water supply and sanitation and one on food security. The United Nations system should contribute to the campaign to launch the Initiative by mobilizing political commitment and support.

23. ECA should elaborate and forward to OAU an information document regarding the Initiative for the information of the meetings of the OAU Council of Ministers and Assembly of Heads of State and Government, to be held in February and June 1996, respectively. A workshop should also be organized by ECA to inform and sensitize OAU member States to this Initiative.

4. United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

24. The United Nations system and OAU should undertake a sensitization and information campaign with a view to increasing the awareness of African leaders and decision makers of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. OAU should actively participate in the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the New Agenda, including in the conduct of the mid-term review of its implementation in 1996.

25. OAU, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization, UNIDO and ECA should organize seminars to sensitize the African business community, chambers of commerce, manufacturers associations and senior trade officials on the details of the Uruguay Round. OAU and UNCTAD should also organize a seminar on commodity price risk management to familiarize senior trade officials with techniques of commodity risk management.

5. Implementation of Agenda 21

26. The United Nations organizations were requested to support the OAU Conference on Agenda 21 (to be preceded by preparatory activities at the national and subregional levels) and its public awareness seminar/workshops on trade and environment. They were also requested to assist OAU in sensitizing African countries on the need to ratify the conventions on desertification, biological diversity and climate change.

27. UNIDO, ECA, ADB, UNEP and other relevant organizations or bodies were requested to intensify their assistance to African countries in carrying out environmental impact assessments of industrial investment programmes. UNHCR,

UNEP and other relevant bodies were asked to assist host countries to carry out environmental impact assessments of refugee situations and to design and implement programmes to address any adverse impact on the environment.

28. The relevant United Nations organizations were requested to support education and training programmes targeted on the youth in the areas of environmental protection, human settlements, disaster management, capacity-building etc., and to sponsor the participation of African youth at forums dealing with those issues. They were also requested to support OAU regional institutions dealing with research on African traditional medicines and medicinal plants.

6. Human resources

29. The meeting emphasized the need for designing and promoting a human resources development and training package, including policy programmes and implementation strategy as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and called upon the United Nations organizations to cooperate with OAU in assisting African countries in restructuring their educational curricula to make them more relevant to their development needs and exploiting to the fullest the available programmes developed within the United Nations system; promoting free and compulsory education for all children, especially girls and young women; and promoting peace and civic education with a view to making it a compulsory subject within basic education curricula.

30. The United Nations system was requested to support the efforts of OAU in the fight against drug trafficking and juvenile delinquency, crime prevention and disability, and to assist OAU to enhance its capacity in those areas, as well as in the promotion of employment. The organizations were also asked to formulate programmes to strengthen the capacity of OAU for information-gathering, analysis and dissemination through the training of personnel; and to reinforce information infrastructure and institutions, including the provision of technical and financial assistance. Furthermore, the United Nations organizations were asked to undertake with OAU and other relevant African institutions a feasibility study for the establishment of a United Nations/OAU inter-agency centre for information exchange.

31. The United Nations organizations were requested to cooperate with OAU in various other areas including:

(a) Promotion of a culture of peace as a complement to and support for the implementation of the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution;

(b) Extension of the concept of cultural development and cultural dimension of development through joint activities to consolidate the gains of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997);

(c) Promotion of science and technology in OAU member States by teaching science and technology at all levels of the education system;

(d) Strengthening/establishment of science and technology infrastructure, institutions and centres of excellence as well as encouraging the pursuit of research for development;

(e) Creation of an enabling environment to retain African talents and to reverse the brain drain;

(f) Development and implementation of science and technology policies and programmes, including policies and programmes that promote the inflow of foreign technologies;

(g) Establishment of a joint mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of recommendations of Audience Africa in the areas of education, science, culture and communication;

(h) Holding in September 1996 of an OAU seminar on the role of literacy in the promotion of gender equity to celebrate International Literacy Day.

7. Refugees, returnees and displaced persons

32. In their effort to strengthen cooperation, OAU and UNHCR should develop a comprehensive strategy and plan of action with the following objectives:

(a) To ensure that asylum and protection of refugees continue to be granted in Africa through the ongoing promotion of the basic principles of asylum, taking into account the legitimate interests of States and hosting communities;

(b) Given the magnitude and complexity of the refugee crisis in Africa, to place strong emphasis on durable solutions, notably voluntary repatriation of refugees and voluntary return of internally displaced persons to their places of residence;

(c) To reinforce their cooperation in the field of conflict prevention, particularly as far as an early-warning mechanism is concerned;

(d) To take additional and vigorous initiatives to ensure that the recommendations of the Symposium on Refugees and Forced Population Movements, held at Addis Ababa in September 1994, and the Plan of Action adopted by the Regional Conference on Assistance to Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region, held at Bujumbura in February 1995, are effectively implemented;

(e) To develop a more comprehensive programme of assistance and support to the host countries and communities, taking into account the enormous burden imposed on and the symptoms of fatigue of the asylum countries;

(f) To mobilize additional resources in favour of refugees from non-traditional donors.

33. OAU and UNHCR should develop and/or strengthen the appropriate mechanisms to achieve those objectives through implementation of comprehensive strategies and the Plan of Action. They should also review and update their basic agreement for cooperation signed in 1969 in order to reflect the current situation in Africa.

34. United Nations organizations in collaboration with OAU, should continue to give necessary assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and support the efforts under way to promote voluntary repatriation, particularly in the Great Lakes region, and participate in the United Nations consolidated appeals and resource mobilization for refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. All relevant United Nations organizations should continue to assist UNHCR and OAU in their efforts to address the special needs of refugee children and women, in particular their education, training and employment needs.

8. Situation of the African child

35. The United Nations system should assist African countries in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially its paragraphs on the rights of children in armed conflict, and in the signing and ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The two organizations should also cooperate in ensuring the full implementation of the Consensus of Dakar, in particular as regards the safe and free passage of humanitarian relief and aid to innocent victims, as well as in efforts to establish days of tranquillity and zones and corridors of peace for children and women.

36. OAU and UNICEF should cooperate in the creation of an award at the national or regional level which will give due attention to the popularization of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and their full implementation by all countries; campaigns of social sensitization and mobilization for the age of children's enrolment in armies to be raised from 15 to 18 years; and actions to sensitize Governments to people's plight and to shift from the purchase of arms to social services as a means of easing tensions and violence.

37. OAU and UNICEF should also cooperate in the establishment of a chain of solidarity with children in armed conflict, as was done in the case of the campaign against apartheid. All schools in OAU member States should be requested to devote a few minutes every day to the sensitization of children to the suffering of other children. The issue of debt relief for social services benefiting children, especially in conflict-stricken areas, should be taken up more forcefully by OAU and UNICEF with the assistance of all organizations concerned. United Nations organizations were requested to support all OAU activities to eliminate malnutrition among school and out-of-school children.

38. The OAU Secretary-General should include the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter in the agenda of the Chiefs of Staff Seminar on an early-warning system for conflict prevention, which the Council of Ministers of OAU, at its June 1995 session at Addis Ababa, decided to convene.

39. UNICEF should continue to cooperate with OAU with a view to institutionalizing an OAU biennial conference on the follow-up of the mid-decade goals for the child. UNICEF and OAU should continue the mobilization of resources to achieve the decade's goals within the framework of the promotion of genuine partnership to improve the international economic environment and guarantee meaningful development for African children. UNICEF and WHO, in collaboration with OAU, should continue to identify priority actions to help African children in difficult circumstances, including the protection of the female child from all forms of harmful traditional practices, particularly practices such as genital mutilation, and early and forced marriages.

9. Women and development

40. The United Nations organizations should support and cooperate with OAU in the implementation of activities provided for in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995.

10. Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa

41. The United Nations system should intensify its assistance to African countries and organizations in the implementation of the programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, and the Joint Committee of ECA, OAU and UNIDO on the Decade should report on the implementation of the present recommendation at the 1997 meeting on cooperation between the United Nations system and OAU.

42. The organizations of the United Nations system, including the World Trade Organization, should cooperate with the OAU/ECA/UNIDO joint committee in studying the implications of the Uruguay Round for African industry. United Nations organizations should provide assistance in strengthening the Industry Division of the OAU secretariat.

43. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT, ECA, UNIDO and other relevant organizations or bodies of the United Nations system should cooperate with OAU in organizing the Seventh All-Africa Trade Fair at Lagos in November 1996. In particular, UNIDO was called upon to cooperate in the organization of an investment forum during the Fair.

11. Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa

44. Relevant United Nations organizations should endeavour to strengthen their support for the implementation of the programme for the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa by providing technical assistance to the activities of the programme; sensitizing Member States to the need for adequate mobilization of domestic financial resources for the implementation of the programme; and sensitizing development partners to the need to improve their advocacy role and strengthen their financial assistance and support for the programme.

Other matters

45. In the area of health, WHO and other relevant United Nations organizations were requested to support OAU in its programmes to alleviate the health problems of women and children and to tackle other health problems facing the continent, specifically focusing on the concrete actions contained in declarations on HIV/AIDS (Dakar, 1992; Tunis, 1994); the Bamako Initiative; the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (1993-2003); the Declaration on the African Plan of Action concerning the situation of women in Africa in the context of family health (Addis Ababa, 1995); Better Health in Africa initiative; and the Ministerial Conference on Malaria held at Amsterdam in 1992.

46. Priority should continue to be given to the provision of technical and financial support in national AIDS programmes in OAU member States. Technical support should focus on sharing information about successful internationally tested approaches to the prevention of HIV/AIDS/sexually transmitted disease and to the provision of care and support to people with HIV/AIDS, as well as on improving national capacity to plan, implement and review activities and programmes. External financial support for priority activities must continue, especially for countries in greatest need, including improvement of the quality and coverage of health education, surveillance, blood safety, sexually transmitted disease prevention and treatment, and care of persons with HIV/AIDS. These activities should be supported by the provision of supplies and equipment and local subsidies for national training, the production of educational materials, the preparation of socio-behavioural studies and the encouragement of local production of materials of surveillance and care of cases.

47. Relevant United Nations organizations were also requested to support the WHO/Planning and Policy Coordination office based at Addis Ababa in order to make it more operational.

48. United Nations organizations and bodies were requested to report to the next meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and OAU on the actions they have taken to implement the recommendations set out above, as appropriate.